

***TOWN OF NEWFIELDS BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2006***

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. Selectmen present were Janet Smith and James McIlroy. Wes Moore joined the meeting in progress. Others present were: Chief Reed, Sue McKinnon, Larry Arend, and Donna Hanscom.

Chief Reed stated that \$10,500. of funds from the year 2006 could be encumbered for the year 2007. Surpluses in department budgets are normally used to reduce taxes the following year.

The Chief has hired one part-time officer.

James made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 19, 2006 meeting. Janet seconded the motion and the motion passed with both in favor.

At 7:00pm the meeting went into a non-public session per RSA 91-A3II. The meeting reopened to the public at 7:40 pm. Sue met with the Selectmen and asked for a salary increase. No decision was made and Janet suggested putting the request on a warrant article for the voters to decide.

Donna Hanscom spoke to the Selectmen about an error on her property tax bill. Sometime in 2000 or 2001 a clerical error was made on her acreage. The correct acreage is 3.08 acres and was changed to 3.80. Donna would like the Town to refund \$560.00 plus interest for overpayment in taxes.

Sue stated that she contacted the DRA (Linda Kennedy) and was told that there is no mechanism to go back more than one year on abatements. If a property owner is undercharged, the Town can only go back one year to collect additional fees. The same is true of overpayments. Sue also stated that the acreage is shown on each tax bill, but Donna did not notice the error until this year.

Wes stated that he had a similar situation and only received a correction for one year. He stated that only one year could be abated by the Selectmen and suggested that Donna present a Warrant Article for the overpaid taxes.

Janet said that she spoke at length with the DRA today and suggested that Donna contact the DRA if she wished to file an appeal. She gave Donna the contact information at the DRA.

James stated that only one year could be abated by the Selectmen and that there is

implied responsibility for taxpayers to review the information on their tax bill for accuracy.

Wes apologized to Donna for the Town's error. Sue was asked to explain the Warrant process to Donna.

Larry Arend, Trustee of the Library, presented the Library Budget to the Selectmen. Larry stated that the Budget Advisory Committee told him absolutely no raises for the Library workers and he questioned why other Town employees were receiving increases in pay and not the Library. He stated that the total dollar amount for the raises for one year would be less than \$2,000. He feels that you need to pay the good workers in order to keep them.

Janet said that employees are simply adding what they would like for a salary increase to their budgets, and since the Town doesn't really have a good mechanism in place in deciding what increases individual employees should be receiving, it would be best to let the voters decide by way of a warrant article. Wes feels that COLA increases should not be on a Warrant Article, but should be included in the Budget. James stated that Larry could reduce a few lines on his Budget to keep the Budget Line the same, but include the increases in pay.

Janet feels that the Town needs to provide full disclosure of the budget to the residents and believes that salary increases are often hidden in the budget lines, so it might be best to put all salary increase requests on a Warrant Article. It was mentioned that salary increases could be made public at the Deliberative Session, and people could either vote on it, or vote to increase or decrease it. Janet felt that this would not be good practice because when dealing with delicate issues such as salary increases, it would be best to do it by secret ballot.

Larry is willing to leave his budget flat for 2007 and will expend other funds available to the Library to make up the shortfall. James stated that no Warrant Article would be needed if the Library budget is kept the same as 2006.

The Winter Parking Ban was discussed and Wes feels that if the temperature is above 45 degrees and there is no snow on the ground, parking tickets should not be issued. The Selectmen do not want to change the Winter Parking Ban to a Snow Emergency Parking Ban. Nancy will speak with the Road Agent, Brian Knipstein and see how he feels about relaxing enforcement of the parking ban based on the weather.

The Selectmen will meet on Thursday, December 28th for a working session on the budget and Warrant Articles for 2007.

The Gosselin Abatement form was signed.

The Veteran's Tax Credit Application was approved and signed.

The Citizen's Petition to increase the Veteran's Tax Credit was reviewed.

The offer to purchase the granite steps was not accepted. They will be placed out to bid along with the used slate from the rear of the Town Hall.

Marie Poole's application for an abatement of the Inventory Form Penalty was accepted.

The correspondence from the Lane Law Office was reviewed.

The Newfields Water District Notice was reviewed and Nancy was asked to post the Notice on the Town Hall bulletin board and upstairs in the Town Hall.

Lamprey Regional Cooperative sent a copy of their budget to the Town along with notice of a Public Hearing on December 29th.

The public notice from the Town of Barrington regarding a proposed cell tower was reviewed.

The correspondence from the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets, & Food was reviewed.

The Town received \$2,695.00 from the State as a reimbursement for larviciding after the public health threat was declared.

Janet made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35pm. Wes seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Spencer